under Rule 56A or 57A of the Central Excise Rules, 1944 had been availed or in respect of any of the inputs used in the manufacture of export product. To obviate this difficulty and to rule out the possibility of double benefits accruing to the exporters on this account, it has been laid down that material imported under the Duty Exemption Scheme shall be subject to the payment of additional customs duty equal to the excise duty at the time of import and the said additional customs duty is adjustable in the prescribed manner.

South African Proposal for Setting up Indian Ocean Trade Block

5839. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that South Africa has proposed the setting up of an Indian Ocean Trade Block;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade has also supported India to join the trade block; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Government is favourably inclined to the suggestion for cooperation among the Indian Ocean Rim countries.

India recently participated in an expert level meeting of 7 Indian Ocean Rim countries (viz. Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore and South Africa) convened by Mauritius at Port Louis on March 29-31, 1995. The meeting agreed on the principles objectives and future action programmes of an Indian Ocean Rim Initiative beginning with these seven countries to promote cooperation in trade, investment, science and technology, tourism and human resource development.

MMTC Cheated of Gold Coins

5840. SHRI GHUFRAM AZAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the MMTC was cheated of gold coins worth lakhs of rupees by some representatives of a private firm recently;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the MMTC have taken any steps to recover the dues and propose to change its policy regarding sale of gold; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) On 8.3.1995 one Shri Arun Jain said to be representative of M/s. Sugandh Fragrances, Village Udaipur, Bhiwadi Alwar (Rajasthan) approached MMTC's Delhi Regional Office at Karol Bagh with Pay Order No. 116445 dated 7.3.1995 for Rs. 4,76,206.50 drawn on Canara Bank, Karol Bagh, New Delhi for purchase of 93 Gold Medallions. On receipt of Pay order, MMTC authorised delivery of 93 Gold Medallions to Shri Arun Jain.

The Pay Order was sent to MMTC's bankers, Canara Bank, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi for crediting the amount to MMTC's account on 13th